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A

GUIDE

TO

THE BEAUTIES

OF THE

BRITISH MUSEUM.

BEING

A CRITICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE ACCOUNT

OF THE

Principal Works of Art

CONTAINED IN THE GALLERY OF ANTIQUITIES OF THE ABOVE NATIONAL COLLECTION.

WITH AN APPENDIX,

PRESENTING A GENERAL SUMMARY OF THE CONTENTS OF EACH ROOM.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

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PREFACE.

It will be obvious to the reader even of the title-page of this little work, that it makes no pretensions to interfere with, much less to supersede, the official Synopsis published at the Museum; since it confines its remarks almost entirely to the works of Fine Art, contained in that portion of our National Collection called The Gallery of Antiquities: and even of these it describes only what the writer conceives to be the most striking and important objects. In fact, it is written chiefly for the use of that numerous class of persons who have no time to seek out for themselves the peculiar beauties of this extensive collection, and who yet are both able and willing to enjoy those beauties the moment they are made apparent to them. On account of the multiplicity of objects of which this grand National Gallery consists, the class of visitors above alluded to, for want of some *Guide* of the kind now offered to them, are but too apt to pass a whole morning amidst the almost unrivalled riches of this spot, and to

leave it without having gained any distinct or permanent impressions of what has been presented to them; and are merely able to reply to their own question of "What have we been seeing?" by the answer, "*The British Museum.*" To these persons the writer of this Guide would attempt to convey some of those impressions which he has himself received, during a search diligent at least, and often repeated; and without which search, the beauties here pointed out may have remained undiscovered, even to those best qualified to appreciate and enjoy them.

In a word, whoever has time and inclination to pass a month instead of a morning within the Gallery of Antiquities of the British Museum, may very well do without this Guide, or may be equally well qualified with its writer to act as one themselves: but all others may perhaps find it a useful companion and an agreeable remembrancer.

It is proper to add that portions of the following descriptions appeared some time ago in a distinguished Periodical work; and that it was the favourable reception they met with there, which induced the writer to add to them, and present the whole in a separate form.

A GUIDE,

&c.

INTRODUCTORY.

Sculpture is one of those few things that have hitherto baffled all attempts at explaining the principles on which they affect us. The rationale of its influence is still to seek. In fact, Sculpture, like its sister art, Music, acts upon us in the character of an impulse, which ever has and ever will "outrun the pauser reason." The sentiment excited by Sculpture is altogether different from that excited by any other of the productions of what is called imitative art; and none who are capable of receiving the strongest impressions which the highest efforts of Sculpture are capable of exciting, doubt that those impressions are superior, both in kind and degree, to those result-

ing from any other inanimate objects whatever. Next to the divinity which looks out from the actual face and form of living and breathing man and woman, that which emanates from those of the Apollo Belvidere, the Venus Victrix, the Venus de' Medici, the Antinous, &c. is the most ennobling, the most purifying, and the most permanent. In a picture, the finer the form is, the more it becomes akin to deception. It is nothing but a coloured canvass, and you all the while know it to be such; and yet you may look upon it till you fancy, or rather, till you *feel*, that it has life and motion—that it is a real thing. You view it as something different from what it is; and the more it resembles and reminds you of what it is not, the more it affects you. You say, it looks as if it would speak—as if it would start from the canvass. You exclaim, how *natural* it is!—But nothing of all this happens in regard to Sculpture. In a marble statue there is no deception. It is hard, cold, and lifeless; and it looks to be no other. And yet, the more you endeavour to impress upon yourself that it is a dead image of stone, the more it affects you as a thing of life. But still, you never fancy that it *is* a thing of life—that it will step from its

pedestal, or turn its blank eyes to look upon you. In a word, (a word, however, which perhaps increases instead of explaining the mystery), it is to its freedom from deception, arising from its absence of colour, that Sculpture owes its chief power of affecting us. By means of that negative quality, its other positive qualities are enabled to appeal to the imagination, without communing too intimately with the senses by the way; and their effect, therefore, becomes more purely intellectual, and consequently more permanent and complete.

Perhaps it must be conceded, that, as a general collection of Sculpture, the Gallery of the British Museum is considerably inferior to some others possessed by Continental States; and assuredly, with that of the Louvre even in its *present* state, it can bear no comparison whatever. But on the other hand, we may confidently boast, that as *a school of study*, our national Museum is superior to any other in existence, if it be only in virtue of that portion of it which is generally known as The Elgin Marbles. In admitting, however, its general inferiority to some others, and in particular to that of the Louvre, it must be understood that we exclude its collection of Egyptian Antiquities

In *those* it is greatly richer than any other Gallery in the world: and as objects of rarity, no less than of real and deep historical interest, they are of the first importance.

We shall begin our detailed examination of this Gallery where the Gallery itself begins: premising, that its great extent precludes a notice of any but the most striking and valuable objects; and that our criterions of value are beauty of design and perfection of execution,—not mere rarity and curiosity.

GALLERY OF ANTIQUITIES.*

ROOM I.

Terracottas.

The first room is a small ante-room containing a very choice and pleasing collection of ancient Terracottas. These may perhaps not attract the attention of the mere casual observer; but they will on examination be found highly interesting and curious even to him, as affording the most unequivocal evidence that in this art, as in all others of a similar kind without

* On the ground floor.

exception, the ancients have placed any hope of a rivalry with them out of the question. The two terminal heads of bearded Bacchus, which occupy two opposite corners of this room (Nos. 3 and 75.) though probably intended for the commonest purposes to which objects of this nature were ever applied, are in fact beautiful works of art. There is also a majestic severity of expression about them, which is but little consistent with ordinary notions of the god whom they represent. Nos. 45 and 46—which are small bas-reliefs—also exhibit the power and spirit of expression which may be given to objects of this class. They each represent a head of the wood-god, Pan, with the head of a satyr on either side.—The four small statues which are placed at the four corners of this room, are well worth attention, for the air of purity and grandeur which pervades them.

ROOM II.

The second room is a circular domed vestibule, which forms the first portion of the main gallery; all the rest (with the exception of the Elgin gallery) consisting of a suite of rooms, in a line with this. In this room we meet with some of the true gems of the collection. For

the sake of convenience, we will examine them according to their numerical arrangement.

No. 2. The first work in this room claiming particular notice, is a small cylindrical Vase with a cover, surrounded with numerous figures in high relief.

I do not point this out on account of the beauty of its workmanship; for it is comparatively rude and coarse; but on account of the infinite spirit which is struck out from many parts of it; almost unconsciously, as it should seem, on the part of the artist. He was evidently either some mere tyro; or the price he was to receive would only permit him to bestow a few hasty hours on the work; and yet it seems as if he could not help filling it with spirit and expression, whether he tried or not.

No. 4. A Statue of Cupid cutting his bow. It is a work by no means in the first class of ancient art; but it is highly interesting nevertheless, on several accounts. In the first place, the subject seems to have been a favourite one with the ancient artists. There is a smaller statue in this collection, which is nearly a re-

petition of the one before us. There is also, if we mistake not, at least one other at the Louvre, and it occurs in antique gems. But to us moderns it is perhaps still more interesting, on account of its having served as a hint at least, if not a model, for one of the most charming pictures in the world—the Cupid of Parmegiano, now in the gallery of the Marquis of Stafford, at Cleveland House; and which is said to have been painted expressly for Bayard, "*Le chevalier sans peur et sans reproche.*"—We repeat, this statue is not in the first-rate manner of the Greek sculptors; but it is full of truth and nature, nevertheless.

No. 8. A whole-length draped Statue of a Female, which has served as a Caryatide to support the pediment of a small temple. It is executed in a charmingly simple and pure style, and has the rare merit of being almost entirely perfect as to preservation. The spectator may regard it as nearly in the state in which it came from the sculptor's hands; which is the case with very few antique statues; and without which it is impossible to look upon a work of this nature with full satisfaction, however skilfully the restoration may have been effected.

No. 11. We point out this object, rather because it is the best specimen of ancient Marble Vases in this collection, than because it is positively first-rate. The figures in low relief, which encircle it, are full of grace; but it is altogether very inferior to many which exist elsewhere.

No. 14. We now arrive at what may perhaps be pointed out as one of the three very finest and most valuable objects in this collection. It is a whole-length figure, the size of life, representing a Venus, or Nymph. The lower part of the figure is concealed by a drapery, which seems to have been just detached from the upper part,—leaving the whole of that above the waist, exposed. If the exposed part of this figure, including the head, is not in every respect equal to any other similar statue which has descended to us from antiquity, it is certainly very little inferior. In severe beauty of expression, and rich purity of style, it may vie with almost anything in existence; and the execution of the *flesh* is truly admirable; it comes nearer to that of Titian's pictures than anything else; or, at all events, it *reminds* one of Titian's pictures—which nothing else does.

The drapery of this charming work is also peculiarly worthy of notice and admiration. The upper part of it, in particular, is twisted and involved in the most complicated manner that it can be, consistently with the supposition that it has taken its present arrangement accidentally in falling; and yet every part of it is so perfectly natural and correct, with reference to all the other parts, that the eye can untwist it.

It must be understood that all which has now been said of this delightful specimen of ancient art, supposes the absence of the left arm of the figure. *That* is a restoration (so called); and if it is not absolutely a disfigurement, assuredly it is not a portion of the figure that the ancient artist could possibly mistake for *his* work, if he could look upon it now. The chief beauty of all the first-rate sculpture of the best ages of Greece is, that perfect *naturalness* which is absolutely incompatible with anything like a *studied* grace of action and deportment. And this perfectly unaffected air of nature is peculiarly the characteristic of the work before us, with the sole exception of this *restored* left arm,—which is curved at once fantastically and unmeaningly, into the attitude of a dancing

girl; and more than half destroys the general effect of the figure, to those who cannot *wish it away*. It will be one of our objects, throughout these remarks, to point out these alleged "restorations," wherever they occur in important works; for we cannot but think, that however skilfully they may be executed, they are, generally speaking, worse than labour thrown away; especially in regard to works which form part of a national gallery of study and reference. The Venus Victrix is incomparably the most valuable and interesting piece of sculpture now at the Louvre; and to the credit of the French taste of 1820 be it spoken, it owes much of that interest to its being suffered to remain in its mutilated state. The statue before us was found in the maritime baths of Claudius, at Ostia.

No. 15. On one side of the above lovely statue stands a little bronze Apollo, which is well worthy a passing glance, on account of the noble air which emanates from it, and seems to magnify it to a more than mortal size. No one, on looking at it, seems to feel that it is but a few inches high. This power of producing great effects by ap-

parently inadequate causes, is one of the surest indications of high genius.

No. 19. A magnificent Head of Hercules, full of a certain rude dignity of character, and executed with great force of style.

No. 20. Another Colossal Head of the same hero. It is worth a comparison with the foregoing, on account of the striking difference in the style, which is of a much earlier date, and almost merging in the Egyptian.

No. 21. The only other work we shall notice particularly in this room, is a whole-length Statue, the size of life, representing the Emperor Hadrian, in a Roman military dress. This may also be offered as a striking example of the mischief of "restorating." The ancient portion of the statue, consisting of the trunk, head, &c., is full of a dignified ease, when abstracted from the rest. But the wretched manner in which the right arm, in particular, is restored, gives a constraint, and even an awkwardness to the whole figure, which altogether destroys its *antique* effect. The elaborate work-

manship of the breast-plate, and the extraordinary state of preservation in which it remains, are worthy of remark.

ROOM III.

This room constitutes the principal portion of the first, or what used to be called the Townley Gallery. It contains forty-six objects, consisting of pieces of Bas-relief inserted into the upper part of the walls, and Sculptures ranged beneath them.

No. 4. The first of the Reliefs that seems to call for particular attention, is a large one on the left, representing the Indian Bacchus received as a guest at the dwelling of Icarus. The workmanship is highly elaborate; and there is a peculiar interest arising out of the manner in which the subject is treated. Icarus is receiving his guest in an outer court of his dwelling; and the scene is thus made to offer the very rare appearance of a complete picture of the external portions of a Greek dwelling. There is the shelving tiled roof—the upright windows—the walls wreathed with flowers—the palm tree in the court-yard—another lofty tree rising behind the buildings, &c.

No. 15. This represents the Rape of Dejanira; and though not more than twelve or fourteen inches square, it produces all the spirited and animated effect of a scene the size of life. You can almost see the motion of the Centaur, as he carries off his prize; and the drapery of the Nymph seems to flutter in the air as she is borne along.

This room contains many other Bas-reliefs, of much interest and curiosity; but we must pass them by without particular notice, in favour of the more striking objects with which they are congregated.

No. 22. This work is one of the most delightful in the whole collection. It is a small Statue of a Venus or Nymph, about three feet in height, and breathing the most pure and delicate beauty from every part, no less than from the whole. There is nothing more worthy of admiration, in the works of the Greek sculptors, than the exquisite purity and chasteness of their female forms. Even their Venus—the goddess of mere mortal love—might have stood naked beside Eve in Paradise, and not been ashamed. And yet their beauty, as in the charming exam-

ple here before us, was no less natural and unrestrained in its character, than it was chaste and severe. The Greeks were in fact a people so wholly intellectual, that their idea of voluptuousness itself was an imagination rather than a sentiment. Perhaps not a single female statue has descended to us, which includes an expression, either of face, form, or deportment, that can be called voluptuous, in *our* sense of the term. The naked female statues of the Grecks, with all their resplendent beauty, do not appeal to the mere bodily passions with half the mischievous eloquence that any given "Portrait of a Lady" does, on the chaste walls of our Royal Academy, and from the pencil of some grave R. A.—This sweet little gem of Art has had both the arms restored, like the one noticed in the first room; though in a better spirit, and therefore with a less mischievous effect. Let the spectator (for want of a better use to make of this modern addition in the present instance) compare the handling of the one portion with that of the other. He will find, on a minute examination, that the antique parts look like flesh, but that the restorations look merely like—marble.

No. 23. The next object to be noticed, is an exceedingly curious and interesting slab of marble, cut into an allegorical picture in low relief, representing the Apotheosis of Homer. This, if not invested with much to give it a mere popular interest, will be regarded by scholars and antiquarians as among the most valuable single objects in the Museum. And in fact, during the time of its occupying a distinguished place in the gallery of the Colonna Palace, it was always one of the principal points of attraction, to the learned of all countries, who visited Rome; and it has been written upon by some of the most distinguished of them —among others, by Kircher, Heinsius, Gronovius, Fabricius, Winkelmann, Montfaucon, &c. &c. And indeed, it can scarcely fail to be interesting, even to the most superficial of scholars, as well as to all the lovers and practicers of Fine Art, on various accounts. In the first place, it shows at one view the figures and attributes of Apollo, and all the nine Muses, depicted by a Greek hand, and at a period when their divinity was an object of as unequivocal belief and worship, as that of any other deity has been since. In the next place it demon-

strates, in the most clear and satisfactory manner, not only the sublime honours which were paid to the father of all existing poetry, but the exact manner in which the highest of those honours were paid And further, it is perhaps the most complicated and complete example we possess, of the ancient mode of treating a subject of this kind,—which required a regular and elaborate composition, like a great historical picture. In fact, it is an Epic Picture in marble, and has a beginning, a middle, and an end. The scene is Mount Parnassus. In the upper department, the Muses are obtaining permission of Jupiter (who is seated on the summit) to pay divine honours to the Bard. In the second department, their object is gained, and sanctioned by Apollo, their head and leader. And in the third department, at bottom, the design is put into execution. In regard to the workmanship of this curious piece of sculpture, its characteristic seems to be ease and spirit, without any thing elaborate, still less finical or affected. Another source of interest attached to it is, that it bears the name of the sculptor, Archelaus, of Priene, &c. **ΑΡΧΕΛΑΟΣ ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝΙΟΥ ΕΠΟΙΗΣΕ ΠΡΙΗΝΕΤΣ.**

This piece of Sculpture was found about the

middle of the seventeenth century, in the Appian road, ten miles from Rome.

No 24. This is a highly characteristic and spirited Statue of a Faun. The limbs of this figure are *all* modern; they are executed, however, in a much better spirit than most of the restorations we meet with here. But the chief interest of this statue depends on the face, which is admirably rich and true. It is redolent of wine and the woods, without having any thing about it in the slightest degree conventional. It has an ideal grossness and sensuality belonging to it, unmixed with any thing that can be called low or vulgar. The restorer of this statue has put a Pan's pipe into its hand, which he has made it hold with all the air of a French *petit maitre*, playing to his mistress.

No. 25. Close to the above stands an exceedingly fine Head, which is usually considered as representing Homer. Its great merit is, that it preserves a high and noble expression, in the midst of marks of extreme old age.

Nos. 27. and 29. These are two curious and interesting pieces, each representing the

bearded Bacchus; one of them being executed in a very beautiful, but highly antique style, approaching to the Egyptian; and the other, forming the upper portion of an entire Terminus.

We must now prepare to quit this room, merely glancing at two or three objects as we pass out.

No. 31. is a very curious remnant of a group, which appears to have consisted of two boys, who have quarrelled while playing at *tali*, (in school-boys' English, *dibbs)* and one is seizing the arm of the other, to bite it. The whole is executed with extraordinary spirit.

No. 32. is a terminal head, bearing the name of Pericles. There is a fine serenity about the face, not unmixed with an expression of mild melancholy.

No. 40.* is a most exquisite little fragment, a Torso, apparently of Hercules. This little piece, which is only three or four inches long, is sufficient to demonstrate the absence of any necessity to restore. What is left suffers not the slightest injury from the want of what is lost.

No 45. The last piece to which we shall pay particular attention in this room, is a group of Acteon attacked by his Dogs. It is executed with great spirit and truth. The face of the hunter is covered with a fine air of mingled astonishment and terror, neither of them overstepping the bounds of grace. The dogs have exactly the character of wolves.

ROOM IV.

This is a circular domed vestibule, seeming to form the centre of the gallery. It contains but few objects; but two or three of them are of a splendid character.

No. 5. A complete Statue, the size of life, and remarkably perfect, as to preservation. It is said to represent Thalia; but it seems to be of Roman, not of Greek workmanship. It is, however, of great value, particularly for the drapery, with which it is nearly covered, and which is designed and executed with great taste and elegance.

No. 11. Another Statue, of a still superior degree of merit, representing Diana. This also is covered by a beautiful drapery, which is re-

markable for its extreme freedom. It seems to fly out backward, as the figure advances against the wind.

No. 8. A group, which is of a still higher character than the two preceding, and evidently from a Greek hand. It represents Bacchus and Ampelos. The whole air, attitude, and expression of the Bacchus are rich and poetical in the highest degree; and every part breathes forth a voluptuous grace, uncontaminated by the slightest tinge of grossness. The figure of Ampelos, on which Bacchus is leaning, represents a vine-tree half emerging into a human form. (The word signifies *a vine*.) The latter is not executed in so fine a style as the Bacchus, and seems purposely kept in subservience to it, in order to increase the effect.

The other noticeable objects in this room are several splendid Busts of Roman workmanship: for the Romans probably equalled the Greeks in their busts.

No. 1. A Bust of Trajan—highly natural and fine.

No. 6. A Bust of Marcus Aurelius—full of a calm and dignified repose.

No. 7. A Bust of Lucius Verus—a splendid head, blending together the coxcomb and the patrician in a very edifying manner.

ROOM V.

This is a small square one, to the right of the last; and it may be passed over without pointing out any particular objects for notice; but not without mentioning that nearly all its contents will repay a careful examination, to those who would improve their general taste and knowledge in regard to objects of this nature. It contains nearly fifty different objects, all connected with the Roman rites of sepulture—many of which are extremely beautiful as works of art.

ROOM VI.

This is a continuation of the long Gallery, and contains a vast number of admirable works, in nearly all the different departments of sculpture.

From 1. to 14. consist of a series of Reliefs, taken from the fronts of Sarcophagi; and in many of which the figures are nearly detached from the back-ground.—No. 12. may be

pointed out as perhaps the most rich, spirited, and full of life. It represents a bacchanalian procession.

No. 24. A statue of a Satyr, highly animated and characteristic.

No. 31. A magnificent head, probably representing one of the Homeric heroes. It is instinct with spirit and fire, and displays the hand of high genius in every touch of it.

No. 52. A charming statue of Libera, very perfect in its preservation.

No. 57. A small statue of a Fisherman.—This was, no doubt, employed as a votive offering, by one of the common people. Its exquisite workmanship becomes, therefore, doubly interesting, when viewed as an illustration of the state in which art must then have been. Nothing can be more admirably natural than the expression of the face.

Nos. 61 and 65. Two admirable Busts, one of Augustus, and the other of Caracalla.

No. 64. This is an object of great interest and curiosity, supposing the conjecture concerning it be true. It represents part of a Votive Altar, on which is an Inscription, praying for the safe return of Septimus Severus and his family from some expedition. There is, however, a part of the inscription erased; and it is supposed that this was the part which contained the name of Geta—which name the Emperor Caracalla had, by an express edict, ordered to be erased from every inscription throughout the Roman Empire.

No. 68. This group of two Greyhounds is worthy of notice, on account of the extraordinary air of nature which it displays.

No. 72. A small Statue of Cupid, which was alluded to in connection with the larger one noticed at page 6. It is not executed in the very first style, but is still very charming and natural.

Nos. 71 and 74. Two very small Statues, one representing a Muse, and the other Hercules; each seated on a rock. They are

pointed out for the purpose of showing that mere size has essentially very little to do with either increasing or diminishing grandeur and dignity of effect. In looking at these noble figures, we are never for a moment reminded, except by actual comparison, that they are but a few inches high. The same remarks apply to No. 95, a small statue of Jupiter.

ROOM VII.

THIS is merely a small square space, intermediate between the last great room, and that containing the Egyptian Sculpture. It contains nothing which calls for particular notice.

[Rooms VIII. and IX. contain the noble collection of Egyptian Sculpture. These (together with XIV. and XV. which contain the Phigalean fragments, and those from the Parthenon, called the Elgin Marbles) are reserved for the Second Part of this Guide, in order that the succession of the first Greek and Roman Gallery may not be interrupted.]

ROOM X.

THE principal object contained in this room was, I believe, generally considered as the chief

boast of this collection, before the acquisition of the Elgin Gallery. I allude to the celebrated Discobolus. It is undoubtedly a noble production, full of the true air of antiquity in every part of it: and the anatomical details are made out with infinite truth, skill, and knowledge. But I cannot think that it quite deserves the great comparative fame which it enjoys. The general attitude of the figure is not only deficient in a graceful and natural arrangement, but it is scarcely answerable to the action in which it is engaged; and the left foot, with the toes bent under it, would certainly not contribute its due degree of support to the body under its present action. I repeat, however, the details are peculiarly fine and true. This statue is said to be a copy from one in bronze, executed by Myro.

The other most remarkable objects in this department of the Gallery are the following:

No. 5. An exquisitely beautiful Torso of a female statue.

No. 18. An admirable and most spirited Head of a laughing Faun.

No. 46. A Bust of a youthful Female, which rises out of, and is terminated by, the

leaves of the lotus flower. This bust is one of the most charming works in the whole collection. Nothing can surpass the natural grace, sweetness, and intellectual beauty of its expression; and it has the rare advantage of being as perfect as when it came from the sculptor's hand: or rather it is more so, since it has received those softening and heightening touches which no hand but that of Time can give.

No. 96. A statue of an intoxicated Faun. This is executed with great spirit and force; and the anatomical details are extremely fine.

No. 97. The last object I shall point out in this department of the Gallery is, a Statue of Mercury sleeping on a rock. The execution of this work is not in the most elaborate and finished style of Grecian art; but the conception of it is exceedingly natural and fine. Nothing can be more true than the whole character which pervades every part of the figure. It is a pure and valuable specimen of that entire want of affectation, which was the distinguishing beauty of Greek art at its best period.

PART THE SECOND.

INTRODUCTORY.

THE EGYPTIAN SCULPTURE.

We have now to examine that part of the collection which consists of fragments alone; and first of the Egyptian ones. The wonders which modern discovery has placed before us, in connection with the Arts of Egypt, exercise an almost painful and oppressive effect on the imagination, when we permit it to be directed fully and exclusively towards them. They aggrandize, to a vast extent, our notions of the physical power of the race of beings to which we belong, without in a proportionate degree, or indeed without in any degree, elevating our conception of the intellectual power which is allied to it. It is unquestionable, that since the authentic annals of the world, no human means could have produced the Temples, Tombs.

Statues, &c. in the presence of the merest fragments of which, as they exist in this Collection, we cannot stand without a feeling of awe-stricken amazement. I do not mean that the *art* of constructing them is lost, if we had the necessary materials; but that no single *will* could now so influence and direct the wills of others, as to achieve the works in question. And yet who shall deny that in point of *knowledge*, the present day surpasses that of any other which has preceded it? What becomes of the maxim, then, that "Knowledge is Power?"

Leaving this question for the philosopher to solve, let us examine a few of these evidences of the past existence of a power which nothing but a new Deluge can ever restore to the world—if we should not rather say, inflict upon it.—It may be worth while, however, first to say a few words on the characteristics of Egyptian sculpture in general, as distinguished from all other, and particularly from Greek and Roman, and the modern imitations of these. As compared with the above-named, the character of Egyptian sculpture would generally be called *rude*. But this epithet is assuredly not applicable to it, if it be only because the effect which Egyptian sculpture produces upon the

spectator is exactly that which it was *intended* to produce. It is probable that the sculptured objects we meet with in and about Egyptian temples, were in no case intended to represent merely human beings; and that, in fact, they were not intended to represent any natural beings whatever, in their natural state. The astonishing skill exhibited by the Egyptians in almost every art at present known among us, forbids the supposition, that, if their object had been to present us with mere imitations of what they saw about them, they could not have succeeded better than they have done. They had, in fact, too little reverence and respect for themselves to think of perpetuating their mere outward and visible forms. They had high abstract notions of their *power*, as a race of people; and well they might, considering the stupendous evidences of that power which were constantly before their eyes! But they had but little respect for each other, or for themselves, individually; especially when thought of in connection with those objects to which they paid worship and adoration. Was it likely, then, that they should one day be setting up a statue dedicated to one of their deities, and the next day to one of themselves?

It is only in a state of society verging towards over-refinement, that men set up graven images to one another. In conformity with this view, no Egyptian sculpture should be judged of with a direct reference to the human form in its natural state, or be considered good or bad, in proportion as it assimilates to, or departs from, the best models of that form. On the contrary, there is a *shadowy* character about it, added to a total absence of any thing like *perspective*, (if the word may be so used), which seem to indicate that the forms, of whatever class, which it represents, were imaginative ones entirely; that they were founded in something which the designer had actually seen; but that they were not intended to represent, or even to remind the spectator of, anything real. The forms of Egyptian sculpture are, in their general character, like those which we see in feverish dreams, and which haunt us in that nervous affection called the *night-mare;* and these latter are obviously founded on something that we have previously seen, though more unlike anything belonging to the real world than we could possibly *imagine* in our waking hours. In a word, Egyptian sculpture, properly so called, like the annals of the country which pro-

duced it, and the associations which we are accustomed to connect with those annals and that country, more resembles "a phantasma and a dream," than a reality. In Egypt, sculpture was *not* an "imitative art."

ROOM VIII.

This is a small side room, containing several Egyptian mummies in a very fine condition, and a numerous collection of small Egyptian idols, none of which require particular description.

ROOM IX.

It would probably be difficult, even in Egypt itself, to find collected in one point of view, so many and such fine illustrations of the foregoing remarks, as are to be seen in the room of the British Museum, marked No. IX.—We have said that Egyptian sculpture has a *shadowy* character belonging to it. What is meant will perhaps be better understood, by examining the fragment of stone which stands on the left hand, immediately as you enter this room. (It has no number—being one of the new acquisitions.) It consists of a solid block of granite, from the surface of which projects a company of figures, linked together hand in hand, as if

engaged in dancing. Now, though there is an absolute want of *expression* in these figures—a uniform smoothness of surface, which precludes all appearance of life or action—yet the workmanship cannot be called rude. In fact, the figures lie upon the surface, not like imitations of anything real, but like shadows. There is nothing distinct about them—nothing made out. There is no detail. They are all like each other, too, and like nothing else. "There is no speculation in them." In a word, the huge block of stone before us is scarcely at all changed in its character by the sculptures that are upon it. It is not a piece of sculpture, but a piece of stone.—Now it is not improbable that this effect is exactly what was intended to be produced. In Egypt, sculpture was an art devoted exclusively to religious purposes; and, in this instance, the desired impression seems to have been that of shadowy forms, passing by us as if in a dream;—scarcely seen, and not to be remembered as visible objects; but only to be felt, as we feel the impression of a dream long after we have forgotten all the detail of its forms and circumstances.

No. 11. Turning from the above-named ob-

ject, to the beautiful head of the younger Memnon (so called), we shall find that a somewhat similar character prevails even in this, with all its high finish, and notwithstanding its enormous size. Nothing can be more beautifully executed, in point of mere workmanship, than the face of this noble fragment; but there is no life in it—no character—no expression. It is like a beautiful mask. There cannot be a more striking evidence than is here afforded, that mere *features* do not make up a human face, however (what is called) *regular* and perfect they may be. We do not feel the least degree of human sympathy with this face, because there is nothing individualized about it; the impression is therefore merely shadowy—like that of an outline. And surely, supposing this figure to have represented a Deity, this want of individualized expression is more appropriately expressive than any thing else can be. The Jupiters and Apollos, the Minervas and Venuses, even of the Greeks, were actual likenesses of individual men and women, that most of us may have seen in the course of our lives. But no one ever saw a likeness of this Memnon, any more than they did the Deity himself.—This magnificent fragment formed part

of a colossal statue which stood in front of the great Temple at Thebes, called the Memnonium. It is mentioned in the Synopsis as having been presented to the Museum by Mr. Salt and the late Mr. Burckhardt. But by what oversight can it have happened that the name of Belzoni is not in any way connected with it?—This is the object the acquirement of which for this country would have alone immortalized that extraordinary man, if there had been nothing else to do so. And, though it is true that the actual *money* expended on the undertaking, of bringing it from Thebes to Alexandria, was paid by Messrs. Salt and Burckhardt; yet the time, trouble, and skill, (which were undoubtedly of much more value,) were all supplied by Belzoni. Nay, it is expressly stated by Mr. Burckhardt, in a manuscript letter quoted in the Quarterly Review, that he particularly wished Mr. Belzoni's name to be mentioned in connection with this curious relic, "because (added he) he was actuated by public spirit fully as much as ourselves."*

* It may be worth while to correct an error into which the Quarterly Reviewer of Belzoni's Book seems to have fallen on this point. He says, "We regret to perceive

No. 7. Opposite to the beautiful head of Memnon just described, is placed another head, of nearly equal dimensions, and but little inferior in beauty of workmanship. It also possesses the same characteristic want of character. It is, in fact, a block of granite cut into the representation of a *human* face, but without any individual expression whatever; and even without any sexual expression. It has a *national* character, but nothing more. Perhaps nothing that has been seen in this country, or even in Egypt itself, is calculated to convey a more true, and at the same time favourable impression of Egyptian art, than this beautiful fragment; for the workmanship of it is exquisite; there is enough preserved entire to enable us to judge of the whole statue, almost as well as if it stood

any feeling of irritation on a matter which appears to us of no importance, and on a point, too, wherein the merit of our author has never been called in question. *The name of Belzoni alone is coupled with the bust of Memnon in the Museum; and this we should think, ought to satisfy him.*" Qu. Rev. No. 24, p. 144.—Now the fact is, that in the Synopsis of the Museum, the object in question is described as "presented in 1817, by Henry Salt, Esq. and the late Louis Burckhardt, Esq.;" without a word of Belzoni.

before us; and as to the state of what is preserved, it is as fresh and perfect as on the day that the sculptor's hand quitted it—the stone of which it is composed being indestructible, except by force or fire. There is no number to this object, nor any account of it in the Synopsis; but if we mistake not, it was discovered by Belzoni about six or seven years ago, at Thebes; and was then considered to represent Orus. The head wears a lofty mitre-like cap; and the dimensions of it are ten feet from the neck to the extremity of the cap. Behind this head lies a granite arm, belonging to the same statue.

The next objects which claim attention in this room, are two Sarcophagi; one composed of a beautiful green *breccia*, and entirely covered with hieroglyphics, within and without; and the other of black granite, ornamented in a similar manner. The first of these (No. 5) which was brought from the Mosque of St. Athanasius, at Alexandria, is that on which the late Dr. Clarke has written a most learned, ingenious, and entertaining Dissertation, tending to prove (and really with very considerable show of probability) that it was actually the tomb in which the body of Alexander the Great was

buried. Supposing this to be the case (on which point, however, I do not venture to express any opinion), this object must be regarded as one of the most curious and interesting in the whole collection.

The remaining objects in this room, interesting as they are in the very highest degree, are not susceptible of any particular description which would at all illustrate their character, as they all speak for themselves, and are moreover chiefly fragments, to which, whatever has been said in regard to the above named, is equally applicable. We shall, therefore, not point out any more individual objects, but after recommending the whole collection to the attention of the curious, shall pass on to the concluding portion of this department of the Museum.

ELGIN AND PHIGALIAN MARBLES.
ROOMS XIV AND XV.

On entering these rooms, the writer of these notices feels at once that any thing like general reflections must be avoided. To say nothing of his plan precluding the necessity of these, the Elgin marbles have been spoken of in ge-

neral terms by nearly all the most accomplished practical as well as theoretical authorities of the day; and nothing adequate to their claims has been said of them yet. He is, therefore, not disposed to add one to the number of the failures. But besides this, he very much doubts whether any thing *can* be said of them, that shall increase the impression they are calculated to convey to those who are susceptible of that impression, or create any impression in regard to them which they cannot create for themselves. He will, therefore, merely place the reader before the most striking and remarkable of these objects, and then let them, as it were, speak for themselves: for it is as objects of immediate *sight* that these fragments are chiefly valuable; and those reflections and sentiments which they do not call forth from any given spectator at the moment of seeing them, they cannot be made to call forth at all by any adventitious means. It is true there are some noble and inspiring associations connected with them, which have little to do with their intrinsic merits. But it is these latter that we are considering; because it is on these that their chief, not to say their sole interest and value depend. If the sculptures from the Parthenon had possessed a

less superlative degree of excellence than they do, it would have been a shame and a sacrilege to have brought them away from that hallowed spot. But as it is, all real lovers both of art and of antiquity must rejoice that they have been placed out of the reach of accident, and it may almost be said of time:—for, being as they are the most perfect specimens of art in the world, England possesses in them a school of study that *may* lead to the production of something not absolutely unworthy of such models; while Athens is as rich in those associations which they, when there, did but assist in gathering around her, as she was before they were taken away. In short, England is infinitely richer than before she possessed them, and Athens is no poorer than before she lost them.

The building at present containing the Elgin and Phigalian marbles is merely a temporary one. On descending the stairs which lead out of the principal gallery of sculpture, we find ourselves in a sort of ante-room (No. 14), around the walls of which are ranged a most complete and interesting series of bas-reliefs, which formed two continuous pictures round the interior of the Cella of a small Temple, dedicated to Apollo Epicurius, and situated on an eminence near the

ancient city of Phigalia, in Arcadia. The first eleven slabs represent a battle between the Centaurs and Lapithæ; and the remainder one between the Greeks and Amazons. The different portions of these sculptures are by no means equal in merit, and none of them reach to the very highest pitch of excellence in the art. But, on the other hand, every portion of them, even the least excellent, is instinct with spirit and vitality; and the whole produce an effect superior to any thing else of the kind that we possess, with the single exception of the sculptures from the Parthenon. Perhaps Nos. 5 and 6 may be pointed out as the best separate portions of the whole.—We must not forget to mention that these sculptures, and the temple to which they appertained, (fragmental specimens of the various parts of which will be found in this room), possess a peculiar and almost unique source of interest, in the fact of our being authentically acquainted with the architect who raised the temple. Pausanias gives a particular description of this temple, and tells us that it was raised by Ictinus, the same architect who built the Parthenon itself.

This room should not be quitted by the visitor without his remarking a few other most in-

teresting objects which it contains. The most striking of these is, undoubtedly, the beautiful Caryatis, or architectural Statue (42), forming one of six, which served as supports to the little Temple at Athens, called the Pandroseum. From what has been said above, relative to the Elgin marbles generally, it will be seen that the writer of these notices fully agrees with those who look upon the outcry which was raised, on Lord Elgin bringing them away from their places, as mere folly, where it was not mere cant and affectation. But there is no denying that the arguments which defend and justify the proceeding generally, and in regard to *all* the objects from the Parthenon, in no degree apply to the Statue before us. *That* was only in its true place where it stood, and there was no reason to fear that it would lose that place: for the Athenians themselves looked upon the whole six sisters with a kind of superstitious reverence. In fact, it evinced as little correctness of taste, as well as of moral sentiment, to remove this particular statue from the spot where the hands of its sculptor had placed it, as we cannot help thinking it did in Dr. Clarke, to remove the celebrated statue of Ceres (now at Cambridge) from *its* birth-place and home,

amidst the mingled tears, entreaties, and prophetic execrations of the native peasants, who looked up to it as the chief object of their hopes and prayers. The beautiful little temple, from the façade of which this statue was torn, is, but for this unfortunate outrage, almost in a complete state; and if the present Greek government knows the true interests of the people and the country over which it seeks to preside, it will not think it an object beneath its consideration to take the first favourable opportunity of doing what it can to recover this lost treasure:—for a treasure it is in regard to the spot from whence it came, and to which it may emphatically be said to belong; whereas to us it is comparatively of little value—possessing as we do objects of a similar kind, but of a superior character of workmanship.

The only other objects that need be pointed out in this room are some specimens of columns, capitals, &c. from some of the most celebrated temples of antiquity. What we would point out in particular, are those numbered from 44 to 47 inclusive. The most remarkable of these is an exquisitely ornamented Ionic capital from the portico of the Erectheum, situated in the Acropolis of Athens. This is the temple which

joins to, and forms a sort of moral as well as mechanical union with, that dedicated to Pandrosa, from which the Caryatis (42) was taken.

ROOM XV.

We now enter the room containing the Marbles from the Parthenon ;—perhaps the most beautiful religious temple that ever was erected by human hands, and that ever will be ; and also that which was most celebrated among the ancients themselves, and has been most talked of, visited, and written about, by the moderns. Let us proceed at once to place ourselves before the noblest fragment which Time and the Turks have left us of this exquisite ruin ;—for such unhappily has the Parthenon been, for the last hundred and forty years ; that is to say, since the explosion of a powder magazine, which took place in it during the siege of Athens by the Venetians, in the year 1687. The fragment just alluded to, (No. 71) is now pretty generally considered to represent Theseus. It occupied that triangular portion of the temple, situated immediately above the entrance, and called the Pediment. This figure wants the hands and feet ; and all the superficial part of the head and face has been

destroyed by the effect of exposure to the weather. But, notwithstanding all this, let the spectator contemplate this statue from any point of view he pleases, and then let him say if it be possible to stand before it, or even to think of it afterwards, without a sentiment of mingled surprise and delight, with which no other external object whatever is capable of inspiring him. There is an easy yet dignified elevation of character, which seems as it were to emanate from this noble work as a whole, added to an absolute truth, purity, and simplicity in all the various details, which perhaps do not belong to any other statue known to be in existence. And yet this, be it remembered, did but form one of an immense variety of figures, all executed with a corresponding, if not an absolutely *equal* degree of excellence, and all forming merely the *external* ornaments of a public building, and placed at a distance of between forty and fifty feet from the eyes of the spectator!—Of what, then, must have consisted the interior ornaments of the sacred places of such a temple? It is to be feared that the answer to this question must go nigh to indicate that Art, at the era alluded to, was on the extreme verge from which it *must* descend when once it arrives there: for it cannot remain sta-

tionary at any point. The mere *skill* of the Greek sculptors at the period in question, was so fertile in its efforts, and, at the same time, reached to such absolute perfection, that *mere skill* was not sufficient to satisfy the appetites to which it was destined to administer. Accordingly, we find that the statue of the Goddess of the Parthenon, which was placed in the *interior* of the Temple, was composed of *ivory* and *gold!* From this period the Arts of Greece began to degenerate; for the taste which is not satisfied with absolute and intrinsic beauty of effect, unless it be allied to rarity and costliness of material, is not a taste that can support Art at the highest point of its perfection; that is to say, at the highest point where it reaches, without passing beyond, the purity and truth of that Nature on which it is founded.

Next in value and beauty to the Theseus noticed above, is a figure (No. 70) which about a hundred and fifty years ago occupied a portion of the Western Pediment, but had disappeared, and was considered to be entirely lost, until Lord Elgin recovered it by purchasing a house which had been built close to the spot, and digging where it was likely to have fallen. This figure is now considered to represent Ilissus, the

god of the river of that name, which formerly ran through the plain of Athens. The peculiar attitude of this figure,—which is that of rising by a forcible action from the ground on which it is lying,—prevents it from being so striking in its effects on the general spectator as the statue of Theseus. But perhaps this attitude adds to the value of the figure, as a perfect achievement of art, because it increases, in a very great degree, the knowledge and skill required for that achievement. This figure is also more mutilated than its rival and companion. Nevertheless, with all the disadvantages under which it is seen, the Ilissus must be regarded as one of the most astonishing, if not the most striking and effective works of art in existence. If the reader is scientifically versed in the construction of the human form, let him, if possible, make himself acquainted with the anatomical effect of the action in which this figure is engaged,—that of rising from the ground, while the whole weight of the body rests on the left hand and arm. And then let him point out, if he can, a single error in the detail, from whatever point of view he may regard the figure.

Of the various other fragments of figures which occupied places in the two pediments, we

must forego any detailed description, on account of the extremely imperfect state of their preservation. But we would recommend every one of them to the spectator's marked attention and admiration, if it be only on account of the noble draperies that enfold the greater part of them. But, in fact, there is a certain air of simple and severe grandeur pervading these fragments, which nothing can deprive them of, so long as any marks of their maker's hand are left upon them. The two most striking of these fragments are, that of a Group of Two Females, immediately on the left, as you enter the room (No. 63); and another Group of a similar description, on the right (No. 77). Both of these groups are magnificent in the highest degree. There is also another draped fragment which should be pointed out, on account of the extraordinary effect of motion which is given it by means of the arrangement of the drapery. This figure is marked No 74; and is said to represent Iris, the messenger of the Gods, going on an errand connected with the story represented in the sculpture of the east pediment, from which it is taken.—The only other fragment that we shall mention from this department of the temple, is the Horse's Head, marked

No. 68. This, if not the most valuable, is perhaps the most extraordinary object in the whole collection. However inferior it may be to some others in the intellectual power which it evinces, in mere *power of hand* it perhaps surpasses them all. There never before was such absolute vitality communicated to dead stone—such living and breathing fire struck out of a piece of "cold obstruction."

We must now turn to the other departments of this sculpture; that which was introduced into the exterior Frieze of the temple, above the Colonnade which surrounded it; and that which formed a continued sculptural picture in low relief, continuing all round the upper part of the wall which that colonnade immediately enclosed. Of the Metopes, or square slabs, which were placed at equal distances along the frieze of the external entablature of the temple, there are fifteen specimens, ranged against the upper part of the wall on each side of the room. The whole of these are in an extremely imperfect state; so much so as to require a very careful and practised eye to discover their beauties. But though, from the surface being almost entirely gone, the mere *beauty* of them is greatly impaired, the *merit* which they in-

clude is perhaps almost as conspicuous as it was when they were in a perfect state. There is, in fact, not one of them which is not, even now, instinct with a spirit of truth that cannot be overlooked. No. 1 is extremely beautiful; the anatomical expression of Nos. 2, 6, and 7, are astonishingly fine; 9 is in the most perfect state of any, though not so fine as some others; 11 is highly animated and spirited, though the left leg of the Centaur is bad; and the involved action of 14 is very striking. But perhaps one of the most remarkable qualities displayed in this portion of the sculpture of the Parthenon was the wonderful invention which could produce ninety-two of these groups, each consisting of a single Centaur and a single Lapitha engaged in combat; and every group varying so entirely from all the rest as to admit of all being placed on the same temple.

It only remains to speak of the sculptural Frieze in low relief, which ran round the Cella of the temple. Of this there is a very considerable and valuable portion saved—no less than about fifty slabs, many of which are nearly in a perfect state, and offer unquestionably the most beautiful and valuable specimens in existence of this class of work. When

the Louvre was in its glory, it possessed a single slab from this same frieze, which, though inferior to many in this collection, was then regarded as one of the most choice and valuable *morçeaux* of that unrivalled Gallery of Art. And certainly nothing can be more beautiful, with reference to their intended effect, than many parts of this frieze. There is a still and severe sweetness about them, added to a sort of shadowy and retiring effect, which is most delightful. And the general style of the design and composition is pure, and what must be called, for want of a better phrase, *classical*, in the highest degree. There can be little, if any doubt, too, that the design was furnished by Phidias himself: which adds very greatly to their *extrinsic* value and interest, at least. We will take a glance at the details of what remains of this beautiful composition, as we pass before it from the left extremity on entering the room;—premising that it represents the Procession in which *all* the Athenian people (hence called Panathenaic) joined once in every five years, in honour of Minerva, the goddess of the Parthenon.—The first two slabs, from 15 to 17, are very defective, and consist of draped female figures walking in procession towards a

group, which seems to have been the central point of the whole, and towards which the procession moved from the right as well as the left. This group is said to consist of several of the celestial deities, and deified heroes. The attitude of one of them is, *for a deity*, not a little remarkable. He is seated, with one of his knees elevated, and clapsed between his interwoven fingers; one of those positions which idlesse "is very cunning in," and which every one of us is in the habit of assuming spontaneously, and without ever having seen it assumed by others; though it is one which premeditation would never have taught us.—From 18 to 22, the draped figures, bearing offerings, &c. continue, but are in a very imperfect state.—We now, from 23, all along the left side of the room, to 33, where the slab turns the corner,—are presented with mounted horsemen, and charioteers. This part of the composition, (particularly from 25 to 30), is undoubtedly that which is most worthy of admiration; not only on account of its comparatively good state of preservation, but of the variety and elegance of the composition, and the astonishing life, spirit, and truth of the execution.

From 25, to the end of this side of the room,

the spirit and interest of the scene keeps increasing, till, at length, there is scarcely an air or attitude which can be assumed by an accomplished horseman, that we do not meet with. The whole, too, seem to crowd and press upon each other, with an effect of actual life and motion. Just beyond the left angle, however, which occurs at this part of the room, there is a point in the picture which we must not avoid noticing. We allude to the grossly defective execution of the fore legs of one of the horses which occurs here. It seems to have been occasioned either by some necessary alteration in the arrangement of this part of the composition, or more probably from the work having been for a moment entrusted to some inferior and incapable hand. At all events, it is highly curious and interesting, occurring as it does in the midst of objects which might almost seem to have demanded more than human skill to produce them.—At about No. 33, the composition turns the corner, on the same slab of marble; and then, during all the rest of its extent along the opposite side of the room, it is sadly injured and decayed; until towards the extreme end, where the sacrifices

&c. commence. Here, if any where, the execution is perhaps somewhat inferior.

In conclusion, the reader may be assured, that, in standing before the best parts of this Frieze, (those, for instance, which occupy the left side of the room,) he looks upon the most beautiful and perfect work of its kind now in existence.

APPENDIX.

GENERAL SUMMARY OF THE CONTENTS OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

GROUND FLOOR.

One department of this floor contains the collection of objects, the chief of which have been noticed in the foregoing pages. The other department includes the magnificent Library of Printed Books. It consists of sixteen rooms, none of which are open to strangers; but a noble vista through them is presented to the casual visitor, from the glass door of the little ante-room numbered V. in the Gallery of Antiquities.

UPPER FLOOR.

ROOM I.

THE table-cases, in the middle of this room, contain a most curious and beautiful collection of Fossil Shells; forming a valuable Supplement to the collection of Fossil Organic Remains in Room IX. The sides of the room are occupied by upright cases; those on the left as you enter, containing large Mineralogical Specimens; and those at the end, and on the right, containing objects of great interest and curiosity, illustrative of the manners and habits of many of the (so called) savage tribes of the South Sea Islands and of North America. In the windows are placed table-cases containing specimens of Precious Stones, &c. chiefly in a wrought state.

ROOM II.

THIS room is at present closed.

THE rooms from III. to VII. inclusive, contain various collections of Manuscripts, which cannot be examined without particular permission. They consist of the Lansdowne collection, those

of Sir Hans Sloane and Mr. Birch, the Harleian, the King's collection, the Cottonian, and various other miscellaneous Manuscripts bequeathed or presented to the Museum at different periods. Perhaps the particular object among these which will be considered as most universally interesting to English visitors, is the original Magna Charta, which forms part of the Cottonian collection, and which is so placed in a glazed frame, in the Seventh Room, that every one may examine it.

THE SALOON.

The Saloon, which is the largest apartment in the Museum, is entirely occupied by a collection of Mineralogical Specimens, systematically arranged in fifty table-cases. In the Synopsis of the Museum, the contents of each of these cases are described generally; and, for the convenience of students, an alphabetical list is added of all the minerals exhibited, with a reference to the particular case in which they may be found.

ROOM VIII.

The table-cases in this room contain a collection of Shells. Round the room, against

the walls, are upright cases, containing portions of the general collection of Birds, &c.

ROOM IX.

THIS room contains a curious and highly interesting collection of Fossil Organic Remains, of various descriptions.

ROOM X.

THIS room presents the commencement of a collection of British Minerals. It is proposed to continue this collection till it shall be as complete as present discoveries permit. It is arranged according to the Counties in which the minerals occur respectively.

ROOM XI.

THIS room contains, in upright cases, placed against the walls, a very interesting collection of British Birds. In table-cases, on the floor, is a small, but very beautiful collection of Butterflies, Beetles, &c.

GALLERY OF ANTIQUITIES.

THE following rooms form a portion of the Gallery of Antiquities; but were passed over in the detailed notice of that department of the

Museum, on account of the multiplicity of the objects they contain, and the unimportant nature of those objects individually; though, as general collections, respectively, they are in the highest degree valuable and interesting. In particular, the collection of Vases, and other objects illustrative of ancient manners and customs, is perhaps unrivalled in its way. They are not placed on the same floor with the rest of the general Gallery of Antiquities to which they belong, but on an upper floor.

ROOM XI. (Of the Gallery of Antiquities.)

THIS room contains a collection of ancient Coins, consisting of Greek, Roman, Egyptian, &c.; a collection of modern Coins, comprising those of most modern nations; and a collection of Medals, both English and Foreign. These objects can only be viewed by particular permission.

ANTE-ROOM.

THIS room contains one object of very great value and interest. It was long known as the Barberini Vase, from the name of the family in whose palace it was for several generations deposited. It has latterly been called the Portland Vase;—having been purchased of Sir William

Hamilton by the Duchess of Portland, and afterwards presented to the Museum by the Duke of Portland. This vase is only a few inches high, and is formed of a dark blue glass, on the surface of which a white incrustation has been deposited, and then the outer material sculptured down, so as to leave the white figures in relief on the dark ground, in the manner of cameos cut on onyx. The whole object offers a beautiful specimen of Greek art; but the design and sculpture are not so admirable as the high reputation which this vase has always enjoyed would lead us to expect. The subject of the design has never yet been satisfactorily explained; but it is, no doubt, connected with some sepulchral rites; as the vase was found at a short distance from Rome, about the middle of the 16th century, in a sepulchral chamber, and was inclosed in a marble sarcophagus. This room also contains one or two curious specimens of ancient Fresco Painting.

ROOM XII.

This room is appropriated to Sir William Hamilton's collection of objects illustrative of ancient manners and customs. The whole are worthy of the most minute examination; and

the Greek Vases in particular, are, as a collection, truly superb.

ROOM XIII.

This room (which can scarcely be said to belong to the Gallery of Antiquities) contains a most extensive and valuable collection of Drawings and Prints. Like the room of Coins, &c. it cannot be entered without a particular permission.

REGULATIONS

CONNECTED WITH THE ADMISSION OF THE PUBLIC TO THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

The portions of the Museum described in the foregoing pages, are open to the public every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, throughout the year; with the following exceptions, namely, the whole months of August and September; the Christmas, Easter, and Whitsun weeks; and the 30th of January, Ash-Wednesday, Good Friday, and the 5th of November. The Museum opens at Ten and closes at Four. Children apparently under ten years of age, are not admitted.

The rooms containing the Manuscripts, the collection of Prints and Drawings, and the collection of Medals, can only be entered by special permission, obtained through the medium of some officer of the Institution, to whom the

party applying must be known, or must give a satisfactory reference.

THE READING ROOMS.

ADMISSION to the Reading Rooms (which includes the use of the whole Library) is to be obtained as follows: application must be made in writing, to the principal Librarian, specifying the Christian and surname, rank or profession, and place of abode, of the party desiring admission; and also a reference to some person connected with the Museum, to whom the party may be known, or some other satisfactory recommendation. The tickets of admission are granted for a period of six months; at the end of which time they must be renewed by a fresh application.

FINIS.

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A guide to the beauties of the British Museum being a critical an descriptive account of the principal works of art contained in the Gallery of Antiquities of the above National Collection ; with an appendix, presenting a general summary of the contents of each room

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